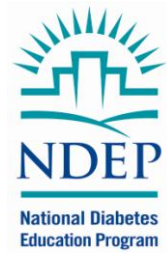


[For health care professionals: e-Newsletter announcement for newsletters, list-servs, etc.]



Talking to Patients about their Family History of Diabetes Can Help Prevent Diabetes in their Future

When it comes to talking about diabetes risk, family history of diabetes is important

Health care professionals have known for a long time that common diseases, like heart disease and certain types of cancer, can run in families.¹ Type 2 diabetes is another serious disease that family members can have in common. Women who have had gestational diabetes are also at increased risk for developing diabetes throughout their lifetime, and the child from that pregnancy is at increased risk for obesity and type 2 diabetes.

A recent survey by the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) showed that while many people are aware of diabetes risk factors, such as being overweight and physically inactive, there is still a disconnect between being aware of diabetes risk, and understanding what that risk means to them. Survey findings suggest that people seem to better understand their personal risk for developing diabetes when they think about how diabetes has affected their family. Although people at risk for type 2 diabetes can't change their family's health history, helping them understand how family history of diabetes can place them at increased risk for this disease is an important step to help people take action on the things they can change.

When talking about medical history, health care professionals should be sure to ask their patients if they have had a history of gestational diabetes, and if their mother had gestational diabetes, in addition to inquiring about a family history of type 1 or type 2 diabetes. If the patient has a family history of diabetes, let them know they are at increased risk for developing the disease. It is just as important to remind patients at risk who are overweight that it is possible to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes if they lose a small amount of weight – as little as 5 to 7 percent (10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person) – and become more physically active.

All health care professionals should encourage patients at risk for diabetes – and their families – to make healthy food choices and be more active. Specific recommendations include eating smaller portions by making half their plate veggies and/or fruit, one-fourth whole grains, and one-fourth protein. Recommend that they try to be active for at least 30 minutes a day, at least five days a week. To help them reach this goal, suggest that they split their physical activity into three daily 10-minute sessions. For support, they can ask family members to join them.

Women who have had gestational diabetes can also prevent or delay type 2 diabetes if they lose a small amount of weight and become more active. They can lower their child's risk for type 2 diabetes by helping them not become overweight, serving healthy foods, and being active as a family.

For more information on helping people at risk prevent type 2 diabetes, contact the National Diabetes Education Program at 1-888-693-NDEP (6337) or visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org to order free resources such as *Your GAME PLAN to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes*, *It's Never Too Early to Prevent Diabetes*, and *Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes*; all are available in English or Spanish.

ⁱ <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/>